

Message Text

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ACTION A-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 NSC-05 /032 W

-----272019Z 092019 /66

O 271910Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5519

WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS KINGSTON 2729

DEPARTMENT FOR A; WHITE HOUSE FOR MS. MARY HOYT

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP JM (CARTER, ROSALYNN)

SUBJECT: BERNARD LODGE SUGAR WORKER'S CO-OP BACKGROUNDER FOR MRS.
CARTER

1. FOLLOWING IS BACKGROUNDER ON BERNARD LODGE SUGAR ESTATE
PROVIDED BY THE GOJ FOR USE BY MRS. CARTER.

2. BERNARD LODGE

BERNARD LODGE NOW HAS 5 COOPERATIVE FARMS INCLUDING THE
SALT POND PILOT. THE OTHERS ARE MARCH PAN (1,672 ACRES),
HALFWAY TREE (1,466 ACRES), WINDSOR PARK (2,444 ACRES) AND
REID'S PEN (2,553 ACRES). THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 270
WORKERS ON EACH FARM. EACH FARM IS AUTONOMOUS WITH ITS OWN
MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE.

CO-OP MANAGEMENT IN JAMAICA.

THE COOPERATIVES OPERATE UNDER A THREE-TIER STRUCTURE OF
MANAGEMENT: THE UNITED SUGAR WORKERS COOPERATIVE COUNCIL
(USWCC) OR CENTRAL COOPERATIVE; THE ESTATE COOPERATIVE OR SUGAR
WORKERS COOPERATIVE COUNCIL (SWCC) AND THE COOPERATIVE FARM.

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THE USWCC IS RESPONSIBLE FOR GENERAL OVERALL POLICY ON THE
FARMS, FINANCIAL PLANNING, AGRO/TECHNICAL ADVICE, ACCOUNTANCY
SERVICES, MARKETING. ITS BOARD HAS 11 MEMBERS ELECTED
DEMOCRATICALLY BY COOPERATIVE MEMBERS OF THEIR ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETINGS.

ESTATE COOPERATIVE

EACH SUGAR ESTATE COMPRISES A NUMBER OF AUTONOMOUS FARMS EACH WITH ITS OWN 11-MAN MANAGING COMMITTEE, PROJECTS OFFICER, ETC. HOWEVER, SINCE THERE ARE CERTAIN FUNCTIONAL NEEDS COMMON TO ALL COOPERATIVES, THEY CAME TOGETHER TO FORM AN ESTATE SUGAR WORKERS COOPERATIVE COUNCIL LTD. (SWCC). THIS COUNCIL IS PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR EFFECTING DECISIONS FOR THE PARTICULAR FARM.

ITS GOALS ARE:

(A) TO EDUCATE, MOTIVATE AND MOBILIZE WORKERS TO THE MEANS OF COOPERATIVE WORKER CONTROL;

(B) TO PROMOTE AND ORGANIZE COOPERATIVE STRUCTURES AT THE FARM AND ESTATE LEVEL.

THE SWCC IS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR CAPITAL EQUIPMENT, CROP PLANNING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES.

THE SWCC COMPRISES REPRESENTATIVES ELECTED AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING BY MEMBERS OF THE INDIVIDUAL COOPERATIVES. REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE SWCC SIT ON THE UNSWCC BOARD.

COOPERATIVE FARMS

THESE ARE PRIMARY PRODUCING COOPERATIVES AT THE FARM LEVEL. EACH FARM HAS A MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE WHICH IS ELECTED AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF FARM MEMBERS. THE MANAGING COMMITTEE SETS POLICY, TAKES DECISIONS AND PASSES THEM ON TO THE PROJECTS MANAGER FOR IMPLEMENTATION. COOPERATIVE EDUCATION OFFICERS AND

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TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL EXPERTS ARE AVAILABLE ON EACH FARM TO ADVISE CO-OP MEMBERS.

WHEN THE COOPERATIVE SYSTEM WAS INTRODUCED, WORKERS WERE INVITED TO BECOME MEMBERS AND TO SUBSCRIBE TO A MINIMUM OF 10 SHARES AT \$2 EACH. SUBSCRIPTION MAKES THE PERSON ELIGIBLE TO VOTE FOR DELEGATES AND THE MANAGING COMMITTEE.

HISTORICALLY, SUGAR PRODUCTION WAS ON THE BASIS OF LARGE ESTATES OWNED BY FOREIGN FIRMS USING SLAVE LABOUR AND SUBSEQUENTLY (LOW) WAGE LABOR. THE STRUCTURE AND THE MODE OF PRODUCTION REMAINED VIRTUALLY INTACT UNTIL 1974 WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF SUGAR WORKERS COOPERATIVES ON THREE OF THE LARGEST SUGAR ESTATES - FROME, MONYMUSK AND BERNARD LODGE.

THESE ESTATES HAD BEEN ACQUIRED FROM THE WEST INDIES SUGAR COMPANY (BEFORE 1972) BY THE THEN GOVERNMENT WITH THE INTENTION OF RE-SELLING THESE LANDS ON THE BASIS OF LARGE TRACTS TO INDIVIDUALS OR FIRMS SO THAT THE SOCIAL RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION

WOULD REMAIN.

THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION REJECTED THIS CONCEPT WHEN IT TOOK OVER IN 1972 IN ORDER TO GIVE THE SUGAR WORKER THE OPPORTUNITY TO OWN AND CONTROL AN INDUSTRY IN WHICH HE HAD TOILED FOR OVER 300 YEARS MAINLY FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS. THIS CONCEPT WAS ALSO A CLEAR EXPRESSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST PHILOSOPHY OF THE GOVERNMENT.

A GOVERNMENT AGENCY, THE FROME/MONYMUSK LAND COMPANY WAS ESTABLISHED TO EFFECT THE TRANSFER, THROUGH LONG LEASE, FROM THE GOVERNMENT TO THE WORKERS.

THE FROME/MONYMUSK LAND COMPANY NO LONGER HAS DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY OVER THE COOPERATIVES AS THIS HAS NOW PASSED TO THE UNITED SUGAR WORKERS COOPERATIVES COUNCIL (USWCC).

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ON DECEMBER 10, 1974, THREE PILOT COOPERATIVES, OF APPROXIMATELY 2,000 ACRES EACH, WERE ESTABLISHED AT BARHAM IN FROME; MORELANDS IN MONYMUSK AND SALT POND IN BERNARD LODGE.

THE DECISION TO START WITH THREE PILOT PROJECTS HINGED LARGELY ON THE FACT THAT THE HISTORY OF COOPERATIVES IN JAMAICA HAS NOT BEEN A GOOD ONE, MAINLY BECAUSE OF INSUFFICIENT STUDY AND PLANNING TO ENSURE THAT TECHNIQUES AND METHODS ARE SUITABLE TO THE JAMAICAN SOCIETY AND ACCEPTABLE BY THE JAMAICAN PEOPLE.

TO PREVENT THIS FROM RECURRING, GOVERNMENT HAS SET UP A COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CENTRE WHICH CONDUCTS EDUCATION AND TRAINING COURSES BOTH AT THE HEAD OFFICE AND IN THE FIELDS, DESIGNED TO COVER VARIOUS ASPECTS OF COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT. THE CENTRE IS AIDED IN THIS RESPECT BY THE INDIVIDUAL SUGAR WORKERS COOPERATIVE COUNCILS.

DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION UNDER THE COOPERATIVE SYSTEM (1974-75) PRODUCTION ON ALL THREE FARMS INCREASED. HOWEVER, THERE WAS A DOWN TURN IN PRODUCTION FOR 1975/76 DUE MAINLY TO DROUGHT CONDITIONS AND THE LATER HARVESTING OF THE 1974/75 CROP.

IN DECEMBER 1975, SEVENTEEN NEW COOPERATIVES (IN ADDITION TO THE 3 PILOTS) WERE ESTABLISHED ON A TOTAL 26,843 ACRES OF LAND. THERE ARE SOME 4,750 MEMBERS. SO FAR, ONLY THE FARM OPERATIONS HAVE BEEN COOPERATIVIZED WITH THE FACTORIES OUTSIDE OF THE COOPERATIVE STRUCTURE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
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Concepts: n/a
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Executive Order: N/A
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
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SAS ID: 2317163
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BERNARD LODGE SUGAR WORKER'S CO-OP BACKGROUNDER FOR MRS. CARTER
TAGS: OVIP, JM, (CARTER, ROSALYNN)
To: STATE WHITE HOUSE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/aaba5087-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009